

Remarks

The Examiner is thanked for the Official Action dated December 26, 2001. This amendment and request for reconsideration is intended to be fully responsive thereto.

Claim 3 was objected to for a minor informality which has been corrected by the above amendment. No new matter has been entered.

The drawings were objected to for failing to reference Figure 1 as “Prior Art.” Applicant has submitted a Replacement Sheet for Figure 1 adding the label “Prior Art” as required by the Examiner.

Claims 1-5 and 7-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by Gabbianelli et al. (US Publication 2001/0002760 A1). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gabbianelli ‘2760. These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

The present invention provides a cross member 298 with an integrated door seal feature or transition flange 288 (see Figure 3). The transition flange is either integrally formed with the cross member 298 or otherwise affixed thereto to simplify the manufacturing process since the transition flange 288 is integrated into an existing frame component – rather than being a separate piece added after the assembly of the cross member, roof rail and pillar member.

Gabbianelli ‘2760 provides a separate transition structure 101 “mounted in vicinity of the joint 42” (see Gabbianelli at col. 4, paragraph 0045). Moreover, the “transition structure 101 is preferably a single-piece stamped sheet metal structure, although the transition structure 101 can

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be of multi-piece construction." Id. Further, Gabbianelli states that the transition structure 101 is disposed within recesses 108, 110 formed in the cross member 26 and the roof rail 16.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite an arrangement where the transition flange extends from the cross member across the roof rail and ending at the pillar member. Gabbianelli fails to teach this arrangement because the transition structure 101 of Gabbianelli is disposed over an outside of the roof rail and pillar member; but does not extend from the cross member 30 to the pillar member.

It is respectfully submitted that the application and claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe additional discussion would advance the prosecution of the present application, they are invited to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Matthew Stavish  
Reg. N° 36,286

Liniak, Berenato & White  
Suite 240  
6550 Rock Spring Drive  
Bethesda MD, 20817  
Tel. (301) 896-0600  
Fax. (703) 896-0607